Fast track clearance for foreign tourists

†556. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to start the facility of Fast Track Clearance on International Airports for foreign tourists arriving in India so that the tourists not willing to wait in the long queue may get immediate clearance at the Airports by paying extra charges;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKACHOWDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Airport Authority of India, a Public Sector Undertaking under the Ministry of Civil Aviation have recently decided to introduce 'specialised passenger handling services' by appointing an Agency at all Indian airports with the name of Swagat Seva' which will carry-out the task of clearing airport formalities and to escort interested passengers to the check-in-and immigration counters. In-bound foreign tourists/passengers requiring particular assistance can avail the services of 'specialised passenger handling services' on round-the-clock-basis at all stages of the 'Swagat Seva' against payment of Rs. 500/- to be charged from the international passenger.

Leasing of Islands to Private Operators

557. SHRIMATI JAYABACHCHAN : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal of leasing 23 islands in Lakshadweep and Andamans to private operators; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKACHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) No decision has been taken in this regard.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.